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Take portions of the roots of the tree called *wagag* (a small palm resembling an areca-palm, possibly another variety, but the nuts are not normally used for chewing). Scrape bits off these roots, and let the woman chew them with the betel-mixture, taking care to swallow some of it.

It is understood that a woman may be sterile without having taken a contraceptive. In the course of giving genealogies informants would sometimes remark, speaking of a childless marriage: 'This woman was not able to have children.' They clearly make a distinction, in talking about persons known to them, between this state of affairs and one in which 'the woman's belly was fast' because she had taken one of the medicines. There was no suggestion that the fault might lie with the male, provided that he was capable of performing the act of coitus.

In this connexion it may be added that I gathered from Government officials and missionaries with some medical training that there is very little venereal disease in this area. Such information as I received from the natives corroborates this.

## PREGNANCY

Pregnancy is suspected after the omission of one menstrual period, unless the woman has been taking one of the numerous medicines (described on p. 269) which are supposed to control or inhibit the flow, in which case she will wait awhile before accepting the fact of pregnancy. They do not keep any tally of the time, and their only means of judging when to expect the birth is by the appearance of the abdomen and breasts.

There is no ceremony such as takes place among the Trobrianders (Malinowski, 1929, p. 184) or the people of New Ireland (Powdermaker, 1933, p. 60), when a woman first discovers that she is pregnant. In the olden days she used to make a belt of a special creeper called *inus*, and to wear hanging from the front of it leaves of a particular plant (*nai'iar*). As every one now wears a loin-cloth, this practice is falling into disuse, though some women wear the belt and the appropriate leaves on the top of the loin-cloth.

## CEREMONY FOR PREGNANT WOMAN

Towards the end of the pregnancy a ceremony is performed with the object of ensuring easy delivery. The only estimate of

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843 the appropriate time which I could obtain was that it took place 'when the woman's belly has grown large'. The first part of it was performed for Sacsac at Kurtatchi on March 13; her baby was born on April 30. Her mother, with whom she was staying, decided when it should be done.

843 A man is sent out into the bush to catch a young opossum. It must be brought to the village alive. Then a woman takes hold of
825 the live opossum and rubs its back against the abdomen of the
842 expectant mother. No particular woman, relative or otherwise, was specified as suitable for this duty, but in the case of Sacsac it was performed by her mother. It must be done just before sunrise. After rubbing the animal up and down several times against the woman's abdomen, the operator lets it fall to the ground. This represents the birth of the child. The people standing round ask: 'What sort of child is it?' If the opossum is a male, the woman says: 'It is a boy', if a female, she says: 'It is a girl.' This is supposed to be prognostic of the sex of the expected child, but my informants admitted that it was not always correct! I was not able to ascertain any views held by these natives as to the determination of sex, apart from this performance, and as far as I could ascertain the sex of the opossum was regarded only as an indication, not as a cause, of the sex of the baby.

843 The opossum is then killed by having its head struck on the
825 ground. Its hair is singed off, and it is boiled in a pot with some taro. Its flesh must be eaten only by women who have borne
[262] children without difficulty, otherwise the mother's delivery will be a hard one. In the case of Sacsac, her mother, who has had seven children, six of whom are living, ate most of it. The pregnant woman herself must drink the water in which the opossum has
[302] been boiled. Then her hair is cut short all round her head just above the ears, and is smeared all over with black paint. Up to this time she has not been allowed to use paint on her head.

843 Then she goes to the sea and washes. She looks for a gap in the
782 reef where the water is pouring in towards the shore very rapidly. Over this she must jump. The action is said to have the effect of shaking up the child so that when it is born delivery will take place quickly. Meanwhile, the women have been collecting all the débris from the food that has been cooked in connexion with the ceremony (the leaves and peelings of the taro, the bones of the opossum, &c.). Some of them carry it down to the sea, accompanying the pregnant

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woman when she goes to wash. As it is thrown into the sea and carried away by the current, all the women call out:

*Som si mē mon ta bai'i ta dum tsūn.*
Give woman child good very

No names are mentioned, but it is understood that it is the *urar* who are called upon. Then the woman puts on a girdle made of the black outside layer of the trunk of the bush banana, and fixes some leaves of the plant called *5ts* into it in front, so that they hang down over her genitals. This plant is one which is always planted in the taro garden in order to ensure a good crop. She must continue to wear this belt until the second part of the pregnancy ceremony has been performed.

When her mother thinks that the time has come for this, which she estimates by noticing the pregnant woman's bodily condition, she takes a certain black stone, washes it carefully, and decorates it with streaks of black and red paint. With the stone she makes passes round the woman's body, touching the skin, and then rubs it on her abdomen, pressing downwards. As she is being rubbed, the pregnant woman must say: 'I want a good child who will be born easily.' Then the child that is in the stone comes out and passes into the woman and helps the real child to be born. The stone is put back into the hut, carefully wrapped up in fibre, to be kept till it is wanted again for the same purpose. The woman takes off her girdle and has her hair cut short over the rest of her head, where it was not cut on the previous occasion. If she has come to her mother's village specially for this ceremony she may now go back to her husband's people. There is no feast at this part of the proceedings.

The black stones used for rubbing the pregnant woman's abdomen are much prized. With great difficulty I succeeded in obtaining one which had been used for the wife of the man who gave it to me; he said she would not have any more children so she would not want it again. It is of a volcanic nature, a species of diorite. It measures 4½×2 in., is oval in shape, and water-worn. It was probably obtained from the bed of one of the rivers which flow from the volcanic interior of the island, and must have come from some distance, because there is no stone of that nature anywhere near the village.

The young woman for whom I saw this ceremony performed

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●843 574 had come from a village about ten miles off, and remained with her mother until some weeks after the birth of her baby. This is very frequently done, if the two villages are not too far distant from each other. In the case of another birth which came under my notice, the woman's mother was dead, but in spite of this the expectant mother came back to her own village and was confined in her sister's hut. The sister was present and helped her through the delivery. Not infrequently, however, a woman will elect to remain in the hut her husband provided for her, in which case, if she is living in her husband's village, his mother will help her.

## DIARY OF A PREGNANT WOMAN

843 During her pregnancy a woman works as usual, except that a primipara will be allowed some relief from heavy work in the taro garden towards the end. All women will carry loads of taro or [482] firewood on their backs right up to the end of the pregnancy; they say this helps the child to be born easily. A pregnant woman must be careful that there are no men in sight while she is preparing her pack, and must wait till they have all gone away.

I kept a record of the activities of Manēv, a girl of eighteen or thereabouts, for three weeks before the birth of her first child, which may be summarized as follows:

*Aug. 4.* A message was sent to me that the confinement might be expected at any time, so I went over to Tabut, where she lived, and arranged to stay there until after the baby was born. Manēv was away at the taro garden, and worked there all day. When I asked how they knew the time was near, her husband said 'the rope has broken here', pointing to a place between her breasts.

*Aug. 5.* Manēv went fishing for shell-fish on the reef, remaining there for several hours.

*Aug. 6.* She went to the bush to get bread-fruit, climbed several trees, and carried an enormous load of bread-fruit home. She danced vigorously at the *kōma* in the evening.

*Aug. 9.* She went with other women to trade with the Ruri people on the road about 3 miles from Tabut. She carried a load of bread-fruit on the outward journey and a load of sweet potatoes home.

*Aug. 10.* Stayed at home most of the day, but carried in a load of firewood in the afternoon.

*Aug. 11.* Was preparing to take a load of taro down to Mrs. Hadden's plantation (about three miles away), but Mrs. Hadden told her not

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to come, so she stayed about the village. Her husband said he thought the child would be born to-morrow. 843 ●

*Aug. 12.* Went to work in the taro garden and brought in a load of taro in the evening.

*Aug. 13.* Sat around most of the day, but brought in a load of firewood she could barely carry. When I said she ought not to have brought so much she laughed. Her husband said it would help the child to be born quickly.

*Aug. 14.* Did little besides household duties and getting firewood.

*Aug. 15.* Walked about five miles to a neighbouring village and the same distance back.

*Aug. 16.* Household duties, sat around most of the day. Brought firewood as usual.

*Aug. 17.* Did little besides cook taro and bring in wood. There seemed to be a definite drop in her abdomen, but she said she had no pain.

*Aug. 18.* No record, as I was away all day.

*Aug. 19.* She went with another woman and myself into the bush to gather canarium almonds. We went to a spot at least four miles from the village, and hunted for nuts in the fallen leaves for a couple of hours or more. Manĕv carried a heavy load of them home, and added half a dozen coco-nut shells full of water half-way back. [222]

*Aug. 20.* She went to the bush to get bread-fruit. During the day she felt ill and lay on the ground. One of the men in the party told me later that he thought the child was going to be born then and there. He told Manĕv she ought not to go to the bush any more.

*Aug. 21.* Sat around talking to me. Slept part of the day. Did the usual cooking and getting of firewood. Said she felt the child's movements, but was not in pain.

*Aug. 22.* Sat around, said the child's movements were making her uncomfortable. But she brought in firewood and did the cooking as usual. Towards evening she got some sand and spread it on the ground and lay down on it.

*Aug. 23.* Went with all the other villagers to the new taro garden for the ceremonial planting. Took over a load of taro stalks, and did some of the planting, which involved stooping continuously for hours at a time.

*Aug. 24.* Sat around. Did the usual cooking and getting wood.

*Aug. 25.* Sat around all day. At dusk went and lay on her side before the fire inside her hut, saying she had pains in her back. Her husband went and fetched his mother, and moved his own bed and a few personal belongings out of the hut into another close by. Labour pains continued all night, and were apparently severe. 844

*Aug. 26.* Child born at sunrise.

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The five women present took turn about at holding her. The woman sitting behind her changed quite frequently. It must actually have been very tiring to maintain that position and keep up the pressure on her back. The other women sat or lay on the plank-beds in the hut, playing with the babies, or suckling them, chatting or dozing. This went on for five or six hours. Once in the course of this time there was an escape of fluid from the vagina, but very little in quantity.

Eventually the women became concerned that things were not progressing more quickly. There were whispers of 'a big child'. Then one of the women burrowed in the ground under the door (which was kept closed all the time and propped shut with a stick), and disinterred a coco-nut, still in its outer sheath. She took a knife and made several slashes in the coco-nut, without removing it from its sheath, and then threw it away into a corner of the hut. I could not make inquiries about this at the time, but Patchip subsequently gave me the following information. He had climbed a coco-nut tree while the pregnancy was still at an early stage, before the enlargement of the abdomen had become very noticeable, and had cut off two green coco-nuts. These he must not throw down on to the ground, as is done when coco-nuts are cut for ordinary drinking purposes, but he had to carry one in his hand and the other in his teeth as he climbed down. They were brought into the house, and their tops were cut off. Then he got some leaves of the tree called *wagag* (the same as that used in one of the prescriptions for barrenness), split off the midrib and broke it open. Taking out the pith from the split stem, he placed this pith in a fold of the leaf, making a kind of funnel. Some drinking-water was then poured through this funnel, passing through the pith as through a filter, into the coco-nuts, mixing with their own milk. The leaf of *wagag* must be thrown away into the sea immediately after being thus used, and the current must take it away. One of the coco-nuts was then heated in the fire, and the expectant mother drank the contents. The other was buried under the floor at the threshold of the hut in which she intended to be confined, and this was the one which was taken up and slashed during the course of her labour. This is done in order to hasten delivery. The object of burying it so carefully beforehand under the threshold is to prevent any one from making 'bad medicine' against the expectant mother so that she would die in child-

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844 enter it for three days after the birth of the child, and other men only after he has done so. But the latter part of this prohibition is not always strictly observed.

844 There are a number of medicines which are used to hasten a delivery if the women who are watching think it is unduly pro-824 tracted. The following is typical:

*Pupūna* (*Pteris tripartita* Sw.)

Take some of the leaves, heat them, and rub them on the woman's abdomen. Squeeze the sap into water and give it to her to drink.

The use of other plants for the same purpose has been described in the account of the birth of Manēv's child. One more may be mentioned because it seems to be comparable with our use of an anodyne:

*Wanōnō* (*Erythrina*, 'the coral tree').

When the woman feels that the pains are very severe, rub the leaves between your hands, mix them with water, and give the water to her to drink; it will lessen the pain.

A number of other plants which may be given to facilitate delivery could not be identified from my specimens. They are used in similar fashion to those above described, or in some cases are chewed with the betel-mixture and rubbed on the woman's abdo-[787 845] men. To the account of the use of one of these my informant added: 'If when the plant is pulled up it is found to have a forked root, the woman is carrying twins.'

## RESTRICTIONS ON SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

● 843 There is no taboo on sexual intercourse right up to the time of child-birth, but in practice it is discontinued towards the end of the pregnancy, though the husband may continue to occupy the same hut until the pains begin.

846 After the birth, intercourse with the mother is strictly interdicted. The duration of this period of abstinence was described to me in various ways: 'Until the child can run about.' 'Until the child begins to talk.' The criterion most frequently cited was: 'Until [164] the child has yaws.' This tropical skin disease falls to the lot of every child, usually between one and two or three years of age. I estimate that, in general, intercourse is not resumed until the child is at least two years old. There is no taboo on the husband's

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## CUSTOMS CONCERNING FOOD

843 During pregnancy a woman may not eat the megapode (*iowa*) nor the fish called *turō*. Her husband should also observe this rule.
262 No reason was given for this taboo. The woman must also abstain from a sea-creature called *awaian*, which is described as like a little snake, and living among the stones in the sea. This taboo would appear to have arisen for a reason like that which forbids a pregnant Trobriand woman to eat certain kinds of fish: 'Just as it is difficult to haul these fish out of their hiding-places, so the baby would not easily be brought forth.' (Malinowski, 1929, p. 193.) A pregnant
843 woman must on no account eat a certain frog called *toktok*, which
262 frequents banana palms. It has unusually long legs, and it is
825 thought that if she eats it her child will have legs of abnormal length.[1] Another kind of frog, *kakō*, which lives in pools in the bush, is specially recommended; if she eats it her child will be large and the period of pregnancy pass easily.

844 While labour is in progress the husband must abstain from food
262 of any kind. The woman's mother, whether present at the confinement or not, must abstain from eating pig.

846 After the birth, for an indeterminate period ('while the baby is very small'), the parents may not eat pig, fish, opossum, shell-fish,
262 or barringtonia fruit. Why the last-named should be included my informants did not know. The effect of the other prohibitions is to confine the parents to a vegetarian diet; this is thought to be of
[276 advantage to the child. The mother is subjected to further restric-
824] tions. She must chew with her areca-nut only the leaf of the betel-pepper, not touching the catkin-like fruit, which is much preferred in the ordinary way. The reason given for this change is that the fruit is stronger than the leaf, and might harm the mother's milk. The nursing mother must also abstain from bananas and canarium almonds. While awaiting Manēv's confinement I was frequently given presents of both these things, which I shared with the expectant mother, to her great enjoyment, but her friend, Ema, who was constantly with us, would never accept any, saying that she was forbidden to eat them because she had a suckling child.

The mother's first meal after her confinement is the occasion of peculiar care. It consists of soup (*siro*), i.e. the water in which the

[1] Little girls are taught by their mothers to avoid this creature. Any unmarried person who eats it will not find favour with the opposite sex.

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In the early morning, as soon as you get up, catch one of the dogs, force his mouth open, and fix it open with a stick of *bɔ̄*. Take some of the mixture in the *kōbū* and smear the dog with it. Then take the dog to the beach, mix some sea-water with the contents of the *kōbū*, and make the dog drink some of it. Then put bits of the stalk of *karamusis* up the dog's nostrils and blow upon them. This makes the nostrils bleed freely, which clears the blood out of the dog's nose so that he can smell the pigs better.

When you have done this to all the dogs, go back to the village, into the men's house, taking the first dog with you, and make the dog eat some of the chewed betel-mixture, without any sea-water mixed with it. Then hold the dog by the tail and swing him round several times, inside the men's house. Treat all the dogs in this way.

This is all that is done on the first day.

Another day, scrape *katʃan* and *managewan*, and scrape some *arog* (coco-nuts, the meat of which is hard and firm and the milk considered unsuitable for drinking). Take a piece of broken pot, put in the scraped coco-nuts and the bark of the two plants, and cook the mixture over the fire without adding any water to it. When it is ready, call for the dog who was treated first the day before, put some of the mixture into half a coco-nut shell, and make him eat it. Then do the same with the second dog, and so on till they have all eaten, in the same order as they were treated the first day.

This is the end of the work for the second day.

Next day, get up early and go and hunt pig. If the dogs kill one, tie it up, call out for men to come and carry it in, take it to the village and cook it in a pot (this is somewhat unusual, pigs are generally roasted). At the same time the women must cook plenty of taro. When the pig is ready, get some leaves of *gunatgu* and throw them into the pot. If this were not done, and if it happened that one of the men who shared the contents of the pot were newly married, and had recently slept with his wife for the first time, or if any of them had a wife who was pregnant, the magic would not work, and the dogs would not be able to kill pigs. But if these leaves are put into the pot, a man in such a case can eat of it without any ill effects. Then all the men of the village eat the pig.

The next day, go out hunting with the dogs again, and kill another pig. Bring it home and cook it in the village, in a pot as before. This pig belongs to the women, who all eat of it. No

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*Konkon* (a creeper).

Chew the root with betel-mixture, spit on to your palm, and rub all over your skin before you start out; this will cause the fish to bite. 226 824

*Wagoguir* (a large tree which grows on the shore).

Pound some of the bark and wash it in sea-water. Drink a little of this mixture, and pour the rest over your head. Chew some of the leaves and spit them out into the sea where the tide will carry them away. Then go and fish for bonito and you will have a good catch.

*Maniyiy* (a sweet-scented grass of the *Cymbopogon* species used in India for making citronella oil).

If you have been very unsuccessful, chew the root with betel-mixture and rub your legs where the rod lies across them, then take another piece of the root and put it in your hair when you go fishing.

It is important that a man who goes fishing for bonito should not have sexual intercourse, either with his wife or with any one else, the night before. If he has done so, it is said that the fish smell the woman and will not bite. The disability may be overcome by chewing the root of *bariur* (*Crinum asiaticum*) with betel-mixture and rubbing the chewed mass on the outside of the thighs where the rod lies across them. This 'removes the smell of the woman' and the fish will then bite. A man whose wife is pregnant must on no account go out in a bonito canoe, neither must a man who is newly married and has recently slept with his wife for the first time. There is no 'medicine' to counteract this taboo. 226 834 824 843

### *Other fishing methods*

For fish other than bonito a variety of methods is employed, of which the following are the most important: 226 462

METHODS USED BY MEN ONLY

A. *Open sea and lagoon fishing.*

1. Net on frame.
2. Troll line.
3. Rod and line.
4. Fishing kite.

B. *Reef fishing.*

5. Bow and arrow.
6. Spear.
7. Line and hook.
8. Hand-plunging trap.